

INTRODUCTION.

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expressive name I could think of, being more proper than that of *flowers*; as the parts which constitute the flowers of a fern are much too minute for the inspection of the naked eye.

In plate 1st, d, e, f, I have given a borrowed figure of a single globe, or separate seed-vessel. These are placed in great numbers on the under side of the lobes, and every assemblage of them covered with a thin transparent film, at first of a pale whitish colour, and as it advances in growth of a brownish hue; before the seeds are ripe it bursts open, and discovers the little globes, which are afterwards greatly increased in magnitude, much extending laterally and enlarging the space occupied by the assemblage while wrapped up in its primary cover. The globes, or separate seed-vessels, are of a figure truly spherical, and are attached to the surface of the leaf by a short footstalk, g. They are surrounded with an articulate chain, or elastic ring, e, d, which, when the seeds are ripe, breaks at h, tears open the shell i in a vertical direction, discharges the seeds, and, as the chain further contracts itself, throws open the two valves f, in an horizontal direction, by which the space of the assemblage is again considerably enlarged, and hence it is that some of the polipodia, and many of the asplenia, become covered with seed-vessels in the last stages of their growth, and thereby become acrosticha according to the present mode of arrangement.

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